

CHIEF EDITOR'S NOTE ON THE RUSSIAN JURY TRIAL

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Jury trial was first introduced to Russia in the second half of the 19th century. It was a part of the Great Judicial Reform of 1864, together with the introduction of the professional judges and attorneys; notary publics; civil procedural and criminal procedural reforms.

Anglo-Saxon legislation served as the model for the Russian jury at that time. These early jury trials were only implemented in Saint Petersburg and Moscow. Only men could be appointed as jury members. The court of jury had the power to consider 410 offences according to the Russian Criminal code. That is around 20% of all offences. In 1878, several offences were excluded from the competence of the jury, e.g., murders of officials and breaches of the peace, etc. A jury consisted of 12 persons. They were separated from the professional judge. Juries did not participate in civil cases.

In 1917, jury trials were abolished by the Soviet Government and lay assessors replaced juries. This model was borrowed from the German *Schöffen* model. Two lay assessors considered criminal and civil cases together with a single professional judge. They served for a term of 2.5 years. In contrast to the jury member, the Soviet lay assessor had the power to consider, together with a judge, not only the determination of a fact, but also the meaning of a law.

In 1993, jury trial was reintroduced in Russia by the Constitution (art. 20, 32, 47, 123). The current Russian jury system is a mix of the 19th century model and Anglo-Saxon legislation. A jury's jurisdiction is limited to aggravated murder, racketeering, aggravated bribery, crimes against justice. Juries are not involved in civil cases and cannot consider crimes against the state.

Jury trials consists of 12 jurors. They are selected from a list of 50 candidates that must be at least 25 years of age and must not have criminal records. The judge pronounces the decision on the basis of the jurors' verdict. In December 2015, President Putin proposed to reducing the number of jurors to between 5 and 7.

Here are some interesting jury-related statistics. Pilot juries were implemented in 1993–1994 in 9 federal regions. Currently, jury trials operate in all regions. The last region to introduce trial by jury was Chechnya in 2010. In 1993, juries considered 2 cases, in 1994, they considered 173 cases. Currently they consider around 500 cases annually, which is around 1% of all criminal cases.